

J&MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
REFORMER

etc., and by Zola's own explanation of the scope and purpose of his Rougon-Macquart series, covered a very wide field. Among the many authors laid under contribution were Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, John Ford, Thomas Carew, Sir George Etherege, Dryden, Congreve, Otway, Prior, Defoe, Swift, Sterne, Fielding, Smollett, Byron, etc., the series running from the time of Elizabeth to the early part of the nineteenth century. At the same time Vizetelly drafted an open letter to Sir A. K. Stephenson, the Solicitor to the Treasury, who now conducted the prosecution, and copies of the letter and of the extracts were forwarded to all the members of the Government and the leading London newspapers. The letter ran as follows: —

SIR, — As the Treasury, after a lapse of four years since the first appearance of the translations of M. Zola's novels, has taken, upon itself the prosecution instituted for the suppression of these books, I beg leave to submit to your notice some hundreds of Extracts, chiefly from English classics, and to ask you if in the event of M. Zola's novels being pronounced "obscene libels,"⁷ publishers will be allowed to continue issuing in their present form the plays of Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, and other old dramatists, and the works of Defoe, Dryden, Swift, Prior, Sterne, Fielding, Smollett, and a score of other writers —

all containing passages far more objectionable than, any that can be picked out from the Zola translations published by me.

I admit that the majority of the works above referred to were written many years ago, still they are largely reprinted at the present day — at times in *Editions de luxe* at a guinea per volume, and at others in People's Editions, priced as low as sixpence, — so that while at the period they were written their circulation was comparatively small, of late years it has increased almost a hundred-fold.